

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 BIB-01  
EB-08 PER-05 A-01 OPR-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01  
/080 W

-----129155 081232Z /50

R 081144Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8891  
USICA WASHDC

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DEPT FOR EUR, M, P, S/P, A, AID

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PDIP, UK  
SUBJECT: HM FOREIGN SERVICE -- BRITISH DIPLOMACY  
REAFFIRMED

SUMMARY: IN A RECENT WHITE PAPER, BRITAIN'S LABOUR  
GOVERNMENT REJECTED THE RADICAL TRANSFORMATION AND  
SCALING DOWN OF ITS FOREIGN SERVICE RECOMMENDED BY A  
"THINK TANK" REPORT A YEAR AGO. WHILE CERTAIN  
RENOVATIONS AND ECONOMIES WILL BE MADE, BRITAIN'S  
DIPLOMACY IN THE FUTURE WILL SEEK TO CARRY ON ITS  
TRADITIONAL LEAD ROLE. THE WHITE PAPER IS IMPORTANT  
AS EVIDENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RENEWED SELF-CONFIDENCE.

MANY OF THE QUESTIONS IT TREATS ARE OF DIRECT INTEREST  
TO OUR OWN FOREIGN SERVICE. END SUMMARY

1. TWELVE MONTHS AGO THE CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW STAFF,  
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S "THINK TANK", ISSUED A "REVIEW  
OF OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION" WHICH EMBODIED A SHARP IF  
INDIRECT ATTACK ON BRITAIN'S FOREIGN SERVICE AS OUTMODED  
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ELITIST, LACKING IN EXPERTISE AND MORE APPROPRIATE TO  
BRITAIN'S ERSTWHILE ROLE AS A WORLD POWER THAN TO HER  
PRESENT REDUCED CIRCUMSTANCES. AMONG CPRS'S RECOMMEN-  
DATIONS WERE: TO MERGE THE FOREIGN SERVICE WITH THE  
HOME CIVIL SERVICE; TO CREATE A CABINET COMMITTEE WITH  
OVERSIGHT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS; TO DECENTRALIZE  
MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VARIOUS FACETS OF

FOREIGN RELATIONS ISSUE BY ISSUE; TO CLOSE ONE THIRD OF BRITAIN'S FOREIGN MISSIONS; TO ELIMINATE THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND MOST INFORMATION SERVICES; AND TO CUT BACK SHARPLY BBC WORLD SERVICE SHORTWAVE BROADCASTS.

2. WHILE A CLOSE READING OF THE NEW WHITE PAPER SHOWS

THAT MANY OF THE DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CPRS STUDY HAVE EITHER BEEN APPROVED OR FOUND ALREADY TO BE IN FORCE, RADICAL RESTRUCTURING WAS REJECTED. THE FOREIGN SERVICE WILL CONTINUE ITS INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE; THE PREEMINENCE OF THE FCO WILL BE MAINTAINED; BRITISH DIPLOMACY WILL AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF RETRENCHMENT. THE NEW WHITE PAPER OPENS WITH A SWEEPING RESTATEMENT OF BRITAIN'S INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES OVERSEAS, SAID TO BEAR THE PERSONAL MARK OF BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN. "THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTS OF LIFE MAKE IT INEVITABLE THAT TODAY, AS IN PREVIOUS CENTURIES, BRITISH INTERESTS SHOULD EXTEND AROUND THE WORLD." POINTING TO THE FACT THAT IN THE 1980'S BRITAIN ALONE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WILL BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ENERGY, THE WHITE PAPER PLEDGES "AN IMAGINATIVE AND EFFECTIVE FOREIGN POLICY" AND PROMISES TO MAKE AVAILABLE THE RESOURCES FOR OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION WHICH SUCH A FOREIGN POLICY ENTAILS. IT LISTS BRITAIN'S ASSETS AS: "OUR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY STRENGTH AS A NATION; OUR UNCLASSIFIED

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HISTORICAL TIES WITH MANY MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNITY; THE BINDING FORCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE; OUR UNQUESTIONED STANDING IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCE AND OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD'S CULTURAL HERITAGE;)THE EXAMPLE OF BRITISH VALUES AND OUR COUNTRY'S DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE; BUT ABOVE ALL THE INFLUENCE WHICH WE DERIVE FROM CO-OPERATIVE AND CO-ORDINATED ACTION WITH OUR PARTNERS IN DEMOCRACY."

3. AMONG THE WHITE PAPER'S CONCLUSIONS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO WASHINGTON ARE:

- A PROGRAM OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE FCO AND 17 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ON A SCALE OF 100 IN EACH DIRECTION OVER THE NEXT FOUR TO FIVE YEARS;
- THE USE OF "MINI-MISSIONS" IN COUNTRIES WHERE BRITISH INTERESTS ARE LIMITED (2-MAN POSTS HEADED BY A MID-GRADE OFFICER);
- THE CLOSING OF SIX POSTS, WITH FIVE MORE UNDER SCRUTINY (THE PRESENT FIGURES ARE 133 EMBASSIES OR MISSIONS AND 89 SUBORDINATE POSTS);
- CUTS IN THE FCO RESEARCH DEPARTMENT (EQUIVALENT

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TO INR IN THE DEPARTMENT) OF 17PERCENT FROM 110 TO 91, IN  
THE OVERSEAS INFORMATION STAFF OF 16.5PERCENT, AND IN OVERSEA  
DEFENSE STAFF OF 25 PERCENT;

-- THE PRODUCTION OF COUNTRY ASSESSMENT PAPERS  
JOINTLY BETWEEN THE FCO AND THE RELEVANT HOME DEPART-  
MENTS (LIKE OUR POLICY REVIEW);

-- AN ADDITIONAL \$20 MILLION OVER THE NEXT FIVE  
YEARS TO IMPROVE THE BBC'S AUDIBILITY, WITH NO CURTAIL-  
MENT OF ITS 24-HOUR SERVICE.

4. COMMENT: WHAT IS STRIKING ABOUT THE WHITE PAPER  
IS ITS INSISTENCE ON BRITAIN'S ABILITY TO CONDUCT  
AN EFFECTIVE AND HIGH-QUALITY DIPLOMATIC EFFORT  
WORLDWIDE. THOUGH A SCEPTIC MIGHT DETECT A TRACE OF  
BLUSTER, THE WHITE PAPER'S MAIN THRUST IS BASED ON  
THE REASONABLE PROPOSITION THAT A NATION WITH  
DIMINISHED ECONOMIC AND MILITARY POWER NEEDS A MORE,  
NOT A LESS, VIGOROUS AND ABLE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.  
THE EMPHASIS WILL CONTINUE ON QUALITY. ACCORDING TO  
THE WHITE PAPER, THE BRITISH DIPLOMATIC SERVICE "HAS  
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HIGH MORALE AND TRADITIONS OF WHICH IT IS JUSTIFIABLY PROUD. THESE ARE NATIONAL ASSETS WHICH IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO DISCARD OR UNDERESTIMATE." IN A SIMILAR VEIN, THE WHITE PAPER EXTOLS BBC'S EXTERNAL SERVICE AS "A PROVEN SUCCESS...A NATIONAL ASSET WHICH WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO PRESERVE." THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE CPRS STUDY COMMISSIONED TWO YEARS AGO IN A MOOD OF SEVERE NATIONAL DEPRESSION OVER THE ECONOMY AND THE WIDE AND CONFIDENT PERSPECTIVE OF THE WHITE PAPER IS STRIKING AND REASSURING. A COPY HAS BEEN POUCHED TO EUR/NE AND TO M/DG.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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